

of federally funded research, and I ask for my colleagues' support.

By Mr. TALENT (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. BOND, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 2696. A bill to extend all of the authorizations of appropriations and direct spending programs under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 until after implementing legislation for the Doha Development Round of World Trade Organization negotiations is enacted into law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, America has the safest, most abundant, best tasting, and least expensive food supply not only in the world, but in the history of the world. There are a lot of good people in the food and fiber production industry who deserve credit for that. But the heart of food production in the United States and the world and the center of the rural communities that produce our food and fiber, is none other than the American family farmer and rancher.

I want to assure everyone here of this. There are a lot of us in Congress and in the country that believe in agriculture; we intend to continue supporting policies that help farmers; and we're not going to apologize to anyone for doing it, especially foreign countries that are not negotiating in good faith with the United States through the WTO.

When I am in Missouri, I hear strong support for the current farm bill. Producers all over the State tell me that they like the programs created in the farm bill and they want to see it extended, especially when we have the uncertainty of the current WTO negotiations hanging over the head of our domestic agriculture industry.

It would be unfair to our nation's agriculture producers to write a new farm bill in the midst of ongoing international trade negotiations. Today, Senator LINCOLN, and I, with a number of other members, filed legislation to extend the current farm bill until the Doha round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations is complete.

Our Nation's farmers and their lenders should not be asked to operate under rules that keep changing. We must have fair global trading rules in place before we write the next farm bill. A farm bill extension is a reasonable and sound approach.

Everyone knows that safe food is abundant in the United States. Farmers and farm workers constitute 2 percent of the total workforce in the United States, yet they help feed the entire world. Unfortunately, some people in Washington believe that we spend too much in securing that safe and abundant food supply.

What does this safe and inexpensive food supply cost the Federal taxpayer? In the United States, domestic support

programs amount to $\frac{3}{4}$ of one per cent of the total Federal budget. For $\frac{3}{4}$ of one per cent our farmers are able to sustain an agriculture industry that produces 25 million jobs and 3.5 trillion dollars in economic activity.

For three quarters of one per cent of the Federal budget, Americans have a hedge against ever being held hostage to food imports the way we are now held hostage to energy imports. Where would our security be without the American family farm? What would it mean for the United States if our family farmers went out of business, and foreign powers could threaten our food as they now threaten our energy? Do we want to rely on Brazil for food the way we rely on Venezuela for oil?

I believe the best way to continue support for this strong sector of our economy is to extend the farm bill until we have a WTO agreement that is good for American agriculture. I do not believe that we should negotiate with our trading partners and against ourselves.

As George Washington wrote in 1796, "Agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more apparent, and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage."

America will be more than ever what George Washington predicted in 1788 it would be: the "storehouse and granary for the whole world."

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that would extend the provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill until our trading partners in the WTO have at least matched our commitment to level disparities in global agriculture trade. I would like to thank Senator TALENT for working with me on this important piece of legislation to farm families in my State of Arkansas and across the Nation.

This legislation would extend our current farm bill until one year after implementing legislation for a WTO Doha agreement is enacted. Then . . . and only then . . . will Congress know what to expect of our trading partners and what our trading partners expect from us.

Four years ago, President Bush, after some noted reluctance, signed into law the 2002 Farm Bill. As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and a farmer's daughter, I played an active role in that debate and was pleased with the outcome, which I view as a compromise between many different interests. Most importantly, I view it as a contract between the farmers in my State of Arkansas and their government. It is meant to offer what little certainty can exist for those who choose to make a living providing the safe and affordable food supply which we as Americans depend on. Unfortunately, certainty is something that's hard to come by in farm country these days.

This Administration has repeatedly asked Congress to cut funding or make

structural changes to the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the fact that CBO estimates it has come in approximately \$13 billion cheaper than anticipated.

This Administration has also refused to provide emergency assistance to agriculture producers, despite the fact that farmers across the Nation faced weather-related disasters of all kinds and record high fuel and fertilizer costs in 2005. A wet spring, followed by extreme drought and rising fuel prices, cost farmers in my State \$923 million last year. In Arkansas, where one in five jobs is tied to agriculture, this impacts the entire State economy.

All the while, producers wait and watch as U.S. negotiators offer proposals in the WTO that would require drastic reductions and changes in our farm support, while our trading partners continue to protect their markets with tariffs and subsidies far higher than we have in the U.S.

I am tired of waiting, and so are my farmers. Very little was accomplished at the WTO ministerial in Hong Kong, and trade officials recently announced that the April 30th deadline for reaching a negotiating framework would pass without progress. The 2002 Farm Bill is set to expire in September of next year, and we are no closer to an agreement in the WTO than we were one year ago.

No doubt our trading partners are quite content to take the wait and see approach. This Administration has made it quite clear that it supports drastic changes to our farm policy, with or without an agreement in the WTO. Our trading partners are demanding that we dismantle our farm program . . . meanwhile they do little to nothing to show that they are willing to do the same. Why would they?

This Administration is sending them the very clear message that they agree with them . . . and envision 2007 as the year to make those changes. If that is the case, what incentive then do our trading partners have to come to the negotiating table at all? More importantly, what does it say about our negotiating priorities if we are simply negotiating with ourselves?

Some may argue that we must change our agriculture policy to avoid further litigation against our farm programs by WTO countries. But without a completed WTO agreement, like the one negotiated in the Uruguay Round, how are we expected to write new farm policy that is compliant? Compliant with what?

In my view, and I think many of my colleagues agree, the best course of action is to extend the current farm bill until we know the rules of the road. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, with jurisdiction over international trade . . . and as a farmer's daughter who understands full well the importance of international markets to the U.S. agriculture industry . . . I am introducing this legislation to send a message to our friends in the WTO. We will not negotiate by ourselves . . . we